

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A direct thermal printer, comprising:

5 a thermal energy source;

 a thermal energy modulator receiving thermal energy from the thermal energy source and transmitting modulated thermal energy to a thermal print medium; and

10 a controller coupled to the thermal energy source and the thermal energy modulator.

2. The direct thermal printer of claim 1, wherein the thermal energy source is a laser.

15 3. The direct thermal printer of claim 2, wherein the thermal energy modulator is a movable reflective surface.

4. The direct thermal printer of claim 1 is wherein the thermal energy source is a heater element.

20 5. The direct thermal printer of claim 4 wherein the thermal energy modulator is an LCD shutter device.

25 6. The direct thermal printer of claim 1 is wherein the thermal energy source is a radiant light device.

7. The direct thermal printer of claim 6 wherein the thermal energy modulator is an LCD shutter device.

30 8. The direct thermal printer of claim 1, further comprising a thermal medium drive mechanism coupled to the controller.

35 9. The direct thermal printer of claim 1, wherein the output power of the thermal energy source is controlled by the controller.

10. A direct thermal printer, comprising:

5 thermal energy source means for generating thermal
energy;

 thermal energy moderator means for receiving thermal
energy from the thermal energy source and transmitting
modulated thermal energy to a thermal print medium; and

10 controller means, coupled to the thermal energy
source means and the thermal energy moderator means for
controlling the operations of the direct thermal printer.

11. A thermal printer, comprising:

15 a direct thermal print head comprising an array of
laser elements;

 a thermal medium drive mechanism; and

 a controller coupled to the direct thermal print
head and the thermal medium drive mechanism.

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